

sheep. The exchange will also have the benefit of protecting view-shed lands along the scenic Little Missouri River. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Forest Service and Burlington Resources concerning exploration and development of Burlington's mineral rights is also intended to provide additional protection to sensitive lands.

I have not had the privilege of visiting this area, but it is my understanding that President Theodore Roosevelt is among the many Americans who have appreciated the stark beauty of these North Dakota lands. In this bill, we are providing the opportunity for future generations to use and enjoy these lands as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Administration supports the objectives of this exchange but did raise concerns in hearing testimony about procedural language in the bill. We, too, would have preferred it had the Forest Service prepared a legislative environmental impact statement for Congress to consider and ratify. And we urge the Forest Service to do so in the future.

But in this case, the Forest Service has engaged in a thorough process with extensive public outreach in negotiating this exchange. Major stakeholders in North Dakota, including environmental groups, support the exchange and the bill. There appears nothing to be gained by undue delay in its implementation.

Again, I compliment the gentleman from North Dakota for his dedication and work on this important legislation. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 750.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 750, the Senate bill just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Wyoming?

There was no objection.

URGING THE PRESIDENT TO PROVIDE HELICOPTERS TO THE COLOMBIAN NATIONAL POLICE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H.Res. 398) urging the President to expeditiously procure and provide three UH-60L Blackhawk utility helicopters to the Colombian National Police solely for the purpose of assisting the Colombian National Police to per-

form their responsibilities to reduce and eliminate the production of illicit drugs in Colombia and the trafficking of such illicit drugs, including the trafficking of drugs such as heroin and cocaine to the United States, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 398

Whereas Colombia is the leading illicit drug producing country in the Western Hemisphere;

Whereas 80 percent of the world's cocaine originates in Colombia;

Whereas based on the most recent data of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), more than 60 percent of the heroin seized in the United States originates in Colombia;

Whereas the Colombian National Police is led by the legendary and incorruptible Director General Jose Serrano, who has dedicated his life to fighting drugs;

Whereas the elite anti-narcotics unit of the Colombian National Police ("DANTI"), under the direction of Colonel Leonardo Gallego, is one of the best and most effective anti-narcotics police forces in the region and the world;

Whereas in the last 10 years more than 4,000 officers of the Colombian National Police have died fighting the scourge of drugs;

Whereas in one recent year alone, according to data of the United States Government, the United States had 141,000 new heroin users and the United States faces historic levels of heroin use among teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17;

Whereas once Colombian heroin is in the stream of commerce it is nearly impossible to interdict because it is concealed and trafficked in very small quantities;

Whereas heroin does not require the traditional large quantities of precursor chemicals and large laboratories to produce and therefore there are fewer opportunities to disrupt its production and distribution;

Whereas the best and most cost efficient method of preventing Colombian heroin from entering the United States is to destroy the opium poppies in the high Andes mountains where Colombian heroin is produced;

Whereas the elite anti-narcotics unit of the Colombian National Police has the responsibility to eradicate both coca and opium in Colombia, including the reduction and elimination of cocaine and heroin production, and they have done a remarkably effective job with the limited and outdated equipment at their disposal;

Whereas more than 40 percent of the anti-narcotics operations of the Colombian National Police involve hostile ground fire from narco-terrorists and 90 percent of such operations involve the use of helicopters;

Whereas the need for better high performance helicopters by the Colombian National Police, especially for use in the high Andes mountains, is essential for more effective eradication of opium in Colombia;

Whereas on December 23, 1997, one of the antiquated Vietnam-era UH-1H Huey helicopters used by the Colombian National Police in an opium eradication mission crashed in the high Andes mountains due to high winds and because it was flying above the safety level recommended by the original manufacturer;

Whereas in the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1998 (Public Law 105-118), amounts were appropriated for the procurement by the United States for the Colombian National Police of three UH-60L Blackhawk utility helicopters that can operate safely and more effectively at the high altitudes of

the Andes mountains where Colombian opium grows at altitudes as high as 12,000 feet;

Whereas the Blackhawk helicopter is a high performance utility helicopter that can perform at the high altitudes of the Andes mountains, as well as survive crashes and sustain ground fire, much better than any other utility helicopter now available to the Colombian National Police in the war on drugs;

Whereas because the Vietnam-era Huey helicopters that the United States has provided the Colombian National Police are outdated and have been developing numerous stress cracks, a sufficient number should be phased-out as soon as possible;

Whereas these Huey helicopters are much older than most of the pilots who fly them, do not have the range due to limited fuel capacity to reach many of the expanding locations of the coca fields or cocaine labs in southern Colombia, nor do they have the lift capacity to carry enough armed officers to reach and secure the opium fields in the high Andes mountains prior to eradication;

Whereas the elite anti-narcotics unit of the Colombian National Police has a stellar record in promoting respect for human rights and has received the seal of approval of a leading international human rights group in their operations to reduce and eradicate illicit drugs in Colombia;

Whereas the Congress also would support assistance to the Colombian military if the military demonstrates the will to fight effectively while respecting civilian non-combatants in the same way the anti-narcotics unit of the Colombian National Police has;

Whereas the narco-terrorists of Colombia have announced that they will now target United States citizens, particularly those United States citizens working with their Colombian counterparts in the fight against illicit drugs in Colombia;

Whereas a leading commander of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia ("FARC") announced recently that the objective of these narco-terrorists, in light of recent successes, will be "to defeat the Americans";

Whereas United States Government personnel in Colombia occasionally fly in these helicopters with the Colombian National Police on their missions are now at even greater risk from these narco-terrorists and their drug trafficking allies;

Whereas in the last six months four anti-narcotics helicopters of the Colombian National Police have been downed in operations;

Whereas the Congress intends to provide the necessary support and assistance to wage an effective war on illicit drugs in Colombia and provide the equipment and assistance needed to protect all of the men and women of the Colombian National Police as well as those Americans who work side by side with the Colombian National Police in this common struggle against illicit drugs; and

Whereas the Administration, in a letter to the Miami Herald from the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) concerning the issue of anti-narcotics assistance to Colombia, stated that the strategy of the "source country", such as the strategy of Colombia, is the best and most effective methods to fight the war on illicit drugs;

Whereas the new Government of Bolivia has made a commitment to eradicate coca/cocaine production in that country within 5 years;

Whereas the United States should support any country that is interested in removing the scourge of drugs from its citizens;

Whereas Bolivia has succeeded in reducing acreage used to produce coca, which is the basis for cocaine production; and

Whereas United States assistance has been a crucial element of this success: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the House of Representatives urges the President to expeditiously procure and provide to the Colombian National Police three UH-60L Blackhawk utility helicopters solely for the purpose of assisting the Colombian National Police to perform their responsibilities to reduce and eliminate the production of illicit drugs in Colombia and the trafficking of such illicit drugs, including the trafficking of drugs such as heroin and cocaine to the United States; and

(2) if the President determines that the procurement and transfer to the Colombian National Police of three UH-60L Blackhawk utility helicopters is not an adequate number of such helicopters to maintain operational feasibility and effectiveness of the Colombian National Police, then the President should promptly inform the Congress as to the appropriate number of additional UH-60L Blackhawk utility helicopters for the Colombian National Police so that amounts can be authorized for the procurement and transfer of such additional helicopters; and

(3) the House of Representatives supports maintaining assistance for Bolivia at least at the level assumed in the fiscal year 1998 budget submission of the President and directs the Administration to act accordingly.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 398.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, late last week the Committee on International Relations passed House Resolution 398, a resolution in support of providing high-tech helicopters to assist the Colombian National Police in their fight against the drug traffickers in Colombia.

Colombia is a key drug source nation in our Western Hemisphere. Eighty percent of the world's cocaine originates there. More than 60 percent of the heroin seized in the United States originates there, as well. The Vice President has estimated that illicit drugs have been costing American society some \$67 billion annually.

Experts agree that stopping the flow of drugs at their source is the best and most effective way to combat this program. Stopping drugs before they reach our shores should be a top foreign policy priority of our Nation. It is what our American people want us to do.

The struggle to change administration policy to permit more anti-narcotic aid to Colombia ended in February of this year, when President Clinton certified Colombia in the vital national interest of our Nation. We now have an opportunity to begin a new chapter in U.S.-Colombia relations in our fight against illicit drugs and the narco-guerrillas. Let us hope that the administration's latest action on certification is not too little, too late.

General Charles Wilhelm, the head of our U.S. Southern Command, notified Congress 2 weeks ago that Colombia is a nation at grave risk. I believe Wilhelm stated that the drug crisis there poses a serious regional threat to Panama, to Ecuador, to Venezuela, and to its southern neighbors as the tentacles of narco-guerrilla activity spreads to those countries.

The guerrillas' monthly income from drugs exceed the entire annual budget of the nation's Drug Control Program and is more than the U.S. annual aid to Colombia. We must take this drug problem seriously. The Colombian National Police need these high-performance utility helicopters. Ninety percent of their anti-drug missions involve choppers that have been taking hostile fire 40 percent of the time.

This resolution calls for the administration to deliver those Black Hawks which we promised in the foreign operations appropriations bill that was signed into law nearly 6 months ago.

A few days ago the Colombian National Police suffered a severe loss that cost the lives of four officers because they did not have a Black Hawk helicopter. On a mission to destroy a cocaine lab, a police Huey helicopter was damaged and forced to land. Four men were left to guard that helicopter until a crew of mechanics could return the next morning to repair the damage. When the repair unit returned the next morning, they found one officer slain and the other missing.

Had a Black Hawk helicopter been available the day before, it would have been able to lift out that stricken Huey, saving both it and the lives of those brave officers who are now among the missing.

In addition, we are now informed that four Americans taken hostage last week by the narco-guerrillas are being held at an altitude of 12,000 feet in the Andes. The Colombian National Police need these Black Hawks in order to reach those altitudes and to get enough armed officers to rescue our fellow citizens.

This legislation also takes note of the important efforts being made by the government of Bolivia. The Department of State has been trying to play Bolivia and Colombia off against one another. This is an improper choice. There are ample funds available to aid both of those countries, which are helping us in the struggle against drugs.

This may require the administration to reprogram funds from other recipients; and, in passing this resolution,

the House is calling upon the administration to provide sufficient funds for both Colombia and Bolivia to address the ongoing crisis by reprogramming funds needed from another source.

I want to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the Speaker for his permanent support in providing the kind of help that is needed for our allies in the Colombian National Police. His support is most important and most meaningful, and so it is duly noted by the Department of State.

I include for the RECORD the U.S. Army's grounding notice on U.S. Hueys, as well as a letter from Col. Gallego of the CMP's anti-drug unit to the gentleman from Indiana (Chairman BURTON) on the critical need for these Black Hawk helicopters.

The material referred to is as follows:

SUBJECT: GROUNDING OF THE UH-1
HELICOPTER FLEET

1. Purpose: To provide information on the Army's decision to ground its UH-1 Helicopter fleet.

2. Facts.

a. Since November 1997, the Army has placed flight restrictions on UH-1 helicopters in response to a trend of spur gear failures in the aircraft's T-53 engines caused by vibration.

b. After careful consideration and as a prudent measure of safety, the Army is grounding its fleet of UH-1 helicopters until each helicopter engine can be tested to determine if the vibration is present. Those aircraft with engines that are experiencing the vibration will remain grounded until new carrier assemblies and spur gears can be installed. Engines that are not experiencing vibration will be temporarily returned to flight with restrictions imposed by the current safety of flight message, until a new improved coated spur gear can be procured and installed in the engines. Once the improved spur gears are installed and tested in the engines that do not exhibit the vibration, those aircraft will be returned to full service without flight restrictions. The Army is making every effort necessary to ensure that essential missions continue.

c. The Army's UH-1 fleet currently consists of 907 aircraft, 284 are in the active Army and 623 are in the Army National Guard. The Army National Guard leadership has been an integral part in the decision process to ground the UH-1 fleet. Although the majority of the UH-1s belong to the Army National Guard, they have more than 400 UH-60 Blackhawks in 37 states which will help alleviate the operational impact until the UH-1 fleet is ungrounded.

d. A "Blue Team" was formed at the US Army Aviation and Missile Command to address the engine problem. The team includes members from the Army and Allied Signal, the engine manufacturer. The team is dedicated to identifying and isolating the root cause of the failures and to developing and implementing a corrective action plan to lift the aircraft flight restrictions as soon as possible.

e. The team has conducted 25 engines tests at the Allied Signal facility in Arizona to isolate the root cause or cause of this vibration. Based on analysis of these extensive tests, the team has found that an engine vibration causes the spur gear failures. It has been determined that the gear fractures are due to high cycle fatigue as the result of excessive vibratory stresses that appear to occur when the engine power turbine operates close to 98% N2 speed. These stresses cause the spur gear to fracture.

f. The long-term solution is to redesign the gear and the N2 Carrier Drive Assembly so that it operates at acceptable stress levels. This solution also incorporates additional features that will improve reliability/durability of the assembly. Over the next 2-3 months development and testing will be underway to verify the corrective action. When the corrective action is verified, we can immediately begin fielding of the improved parts. The lead-time for corrective implementation to begin is driven by 6-month lead-time to design and manufacture new N2 Carrier housings. Installation of the new carrier assembly is scheduled to begin in October of 1998 and will take 18-24 months to complete fleet-wide implementation.

g. An interim approach has been recommended involving spray coating of the spur gear to attenuate the stresses to lower levels. In conjunction, engines on all aircraft will be screened for the root cause vibration using vibration analyzers. Pending successful results from the fatigue life test on the spur gears and engine screening procedures, fielding of the interim fix should be underway by late May 1998. These interim measures will be accomplished with a modification to the Aviation Vibration Analyzer currently fielded in the Army. A scheduled buy of new-coated spur gears will be executed. Delivery of the first 40 gears is scheduled in mid-May with the balance to be delivered in mid-July.

SANTA FE DE BOGOTÁ, D.C.

March, 1998.

Hon. DAN BURTON, *Chairman,*
Government Reform and Oversight Committee,
U.S. Congress, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BURTON: I wanted to thank you for your comments at the International Relations hearing last month. I appreciate your courage and dedication to the men and women of the Colombian National Police.

I want to reemphasize a point from my testimony in front of the International Relations Committee last month. Since that time Colombia has seen a horrible increase in violence by the narco-terrorists. Hundreds of government troops have been killed in attacks by the FARC. This new activity by the FARC validates my testimony that the Colombian National Police need at least six Blackhawk helicopters to operate anti-narcotics missions in the poppy growing region in the high altitudes of the Andes Mountains.

Congressman, my men need these Blackhawks to reach these high altitudes. If we are to have a reasonable chance of eradicating the opium poppy, the Blackhawk is essential to accomplishing this mission.

Thank you again for all of your efforts.

Sincerely,

JOSÉ LEONARDO GALLEGO CASTRILLÓN,
Colombian National Police.

Mr. Speaker, I will quote from the article in the Washington Times, which reported that "The military has grounded Huey helicopters as of today."

The report goes on to say, "The U.S. Army and the National Guard have grounded their fleets of UH-1 Huey helicopters, which have an unexplained history of potentially catastrophic mechanical problems." These are the same helicopters we provided to the Colombian police to help them fight the narcotics.

The report goes on to state, "In all, 907 Huey helicopters are expected to be grounded between 6 months and 2 years. The majority of those are used by the National Guard.

"Gearbox problems in the Hueys were blamed for some near disasters last year. Pilots reported the engines would speed up while gauges dropped to zero.

"The Army still has not found out the cause. According to an internal review, 22 'mishaps' related to the gearbox were reported in the last 2 years. None resulted in death."

These were, again I underscore, the very same Hueys we have provided to the Colombian police and are being used today in Colombia to try to fight their drug war. Leaders such as General Serrano and Colonel Gallego deserve the support of our Nation in the struggle against drugs. They deserve the support with proper equipment.

Accordingly, I ask my colleagues to support this resolution to provide the kind of help that the dedicated police in Colombia deserve and need as they fight our fight, as well as theirs.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), chairman of the Committee on International Relations, for raising the important matter of the United States' support for Colombia in the war against narcotics production in that country.

Mr. Speaker, however, I, along with the ranking Democratic leader of the Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HAMILTON), must reluctantly oppose the measure, House Resolution 398 before us, because there are, I believe, better alternatives to aid the Colombian government in their drug-fighting efforts than by sending three Blackhawk utility helicopters.

□ 1500

Mr. Speaker, the United States is facing a narcotics epidemic of troubling dimension, especially with heroin addiction. Recent government estimates project that we add over 141,000 new users of heroin a year. With the use of heroin by America's teenagers at historic levels, I find it particularly tragic that many of these new addicts are only children, some as young as 12 years of age now.

According to the Drug Enforcement Agency, the vast majority of heroin in the U.S. comes from Colombia, which produces over 80 percent of the world's supply of cocaine as well.

Mr. Speaker, the most effective way I believe to stop this flow of narcotics is to destroy the growing fields of opium poppy and coca plants at its sources in Colombia's Andes Mountains using helicopters. To that effect, I applaud the courageous efforts of the Colombian national police and its Director General, Jose Serrano, in waging the ground war of crop eradication against

narcoterrorists. The war has taken a high toll, with over 4,000 Colombian police officers having sacrificed their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I think we all agree that the United States needs to support the Colombian national police in their drug fighting efforts, which rely heavily on helicopters for field operations. However, I believe it is clearly more cost-effective to upgrade the present fleet of 36 Huey helicopters used by the Colombian national police rather than to provide three new Blackhawk helicopters.

The Blackhawks provided in the past to the Colombian Army have proven to be a financial strain for their government to maintain and even to operate. Furthermore, the Colombian national police does not have pilots and mechanics trained to operate these Blackhawks.

Another important consideration, Mr. Speaker, is that the funds to purchase these Blackhawks, approximately \$36 million, may well jeopardize our important counternarcotics programs in the countries of Peru and perhaps even Bolivia.

Mr. Speaker, I urge our colleagues to oppose House Resolution 398. There are, I believe, better ways to provide assistance to the Republic of Colombia, and I sincerely hope that our colleagues will support us in this effort.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON), a senior member of our committee.

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I think all of us are frustrated in trying to deal with the drug epidemic. There is no question that there are multiple approaches that we should be involved in. Clearly trying to reduce demand is as important an effort as any trying to deal with the addiction issues of American citizens.

But when we look at these other nations and the cost in human lives where their police, government officials, judicial officials have been assassinated, murdered, victims of bombs and other assaults, and to say that they need to be the front line of this battle against these drug cartels which are in reality small armies, and to tell them as we have grounded the helicopters they have in this country, that we will not allow them to have the technology necessary to confront what is a serious threat to their national security and to the lives of many children and adults in this country, I just think is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, I think many of my colleagues are correct, we ought to be doing more. We ought to be doing other things as well. But to tell countries whose military and police personnel have died in large numbers in a battle that we have a hard time imagining, because of the economic attraction to a very large degree of the profits that come out of the American market, to

turn around and say that we are not going to sell them, we are not going to allow them to have the very best technology to confront these military drug units, and they are of military capability, a helicopter that recently was downed in the jungle, the police were killed by the drug lords. The equipment was devastated.

I understand people's concerns, but let me tell my colleagues something. We have sold and given helicopters to countries that had a lot less serious threat than what the Colombians are facing and we have given things more powerful than helicopters to countries that are a lot less stable and have been a lot less cooperative than they have.

This is something that I think, if we are going to continue to have credibility when someone who wants to join us in the fight against drugs says this is what we need, then it seems to me the United States Government ought to make sure they have at least the basic tools to confront the drug cartel. Without these helicopters, the Colombians are going to be at a military disadvantage, and I do not think that is what anybody in this Chamber wants.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON) for his supportive arguments.

Mr. Speaker, I think the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) stated there must be a better way of doing this than just providing Hueys. But I ask the gentleman to note this article that I noted that was in the Washington Times today, that said the military has grounded our Huey helicopters. We are put in a position where we are trying to help them fight a battle, we have given them secondhand, Vietnam-era Huey helicopters that our own Nation now has grounded for at least 6 months to 2 years while they are trying to find out what is wrong with them. It would seem to me that in that kind of a situation, that we could provide the kind of equipment that is truly needed to fight a war.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I fully appreciate the gentleman's position on this issue, but it is my understanding that it is the intention of the administration to do an upgrading and make sure that these Huey helicopters will be in performance.

Now, we do have problems with the Hueys. There is no question about that. But we also have problems with the Blackhawk helicopters. We do not even have properly trained Colombian officers even to operate and to maintain the Blackhawk helicopters, even if we should give them three of them.

While I can appreciate the concerns of the gentleman from New York here,

our concern is that they already know how to operate these Hueys. We do have maintenance problems with them, but it is our hope that the administration will fulfill their commitment to make sure that we not only provide proper maintenance, because in fact these Huey helicopters can be operated and piloted by Colombian officers, that is the concern that we have.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would continue to yield, I have been informed that the Huey IIs do not survive the kind of fighting that is taking place. And they cannot take the kind of shoot-downs that they have been involved with.

Blackhawk helicopters have trained mechanics and have now hired some trained pilots to utilize them. This is something that is needed now, not to wait 6 months to a year or 2 years until our own military has found out what is wrong with the Huey helicopters.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, again reclaiming my time, I would say with utmost respect to the gentleman from New York, our chairman and my good friend, I think the problem that we have here is that we need to have the administration come forward and explain to the Congress what their firm commitment is about not only providing proper maintenance for these 26 Hueys, but to make sure that they operate well.

Now the fact that we do have problems with the Blackhawks, I think we also need a firm commitment from the administration that they will not only give the three helicopters, the Blackhawks, but make sure that the Colombian officers of that country are able to operate them. I think this is one of the problems that we are faced with here.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR).

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise with great concern about this bill. I do not think this is about Colombian drugs; I think this is about Colombian pork, and I will tell my colleagues why.

I lived in Colombia. I know the country well. What we are getting is the Colombian military coming up here and asking us to give them \$36 million for three new Blackhawks. We give \$120 million for all of Latin America to fight drugs, so this is about 25 percent of the entire Latin American drug budget going to Colombia for those three Blackhawk helicopters.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell my colleagues how Colombia has taken advantage of us. Not only do they come here and get free helicopters, but they are importing every day 70 percent of the cut flower market into the United States. They come in free.

We ought to get that money from the business that is making \$300 million off of United States consumers buying Colombian flowers that do not have to pay any tariffs that all other flowers

from all other countries in the world have to pay. And our flower growers in California and New York and other States are going out of business because of the free Colombian imports.

So here we have a bill where the Colombians come up here, ask us for \$36 million for Blackhawks, we give it to them because we are fighting drugs, and at the same time we will not close that open door that we have given them to grow other crops other than drugs.

Mr. Speaker, they are getting it both ways. They get free military equipment, and that free military equipment sometimes is used to suppress human rights in Colombia. More than 3,500 human people were killed in Colombia last year at the hands of military, paramilitary, and guerrilla forces. Yes, there are some bad dudes in Colombia, and the Colombian military supported civilian paramilitary groups which have murdered, tortured and forced the migration of thousands of peasants and villagers.

So here we have a country that does not have the personnel to fly the helicopters, does not have the mechanics to repair the helicopters, but because it is in the drug war, we support it. I think we need to get our priorities straight. We cannot have it both ways. If they get three helicopters eating up most of the drug money for all of Latin America, at the same time we allow them to import all of their flowers here and do not charge them anything, no tariff whatsoever, that is outrageous.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to note that the gentleman is mixing flowers with coca bushes, and I think he fails to recognize the serious impact that the coca trade has had upon the youth of our Nation. 80 percent of the cocaine in the entire world is coming out of Colombia.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GILMAN. I yield to the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) knows, I serve on the Committee on National Security, and I have a couple of questions I would like to put to the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. I understand this is a \$36 million price tag; is that right?

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is correct. It already has been approved and appropriated by our committees last year.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, out of whose budget does this come, if I may ask?

Mr. GILMAN. The State INF, International Narcotics Fund.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, this did not come before the Committee on National Security whatsoever, did it?

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman that it went before the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. SKELTON. But not the Committee on National Security. I have no

recollection of it. I think I would, had it come before that committee.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to note that in fiscal year 1998, \$50 million was appropriated for 12 Huey IIs and three Blackhawk choppers. Colombia is the only nation in South America facing a very heavy guerrilla insurgency, and as I noted before, Colombia is a prime supplier of cocaine not only to our Nation but throughout the world. If we are going to turn our back on their request to give them the proper equipment to fight this war, we are doing a disservice not only to our own Nation but to other nations throughout the world.

Some nine Blackhawk-qualified pilots have been flying more than 3,000 flying hours in Blackhawk helicopters. The question was whether there were qualified pilots. I just would like to notify the gentleman from American Samoa that there are also 11 trained mechanics to keep these Blackhawk helicopters in the air.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE).

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE).

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). The gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) is recognized for 6½ minutes.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak against this bill, and reluctantly because of my friendship and high regard for the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), which I think goes without saying, as well as my regard for the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON).

Nonetheless, I feel, Mr. Speaker, that it is imperative that everyone recognize, as has been indicated by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) our ranking member on the Committee on National Security, that this particular purchase has not come through the procedures and hearings in National Security. I believe we should properly have jurisdiction in this regard.

We are criticized constantly for having a defense budget that is not adequate, or we are criticized for the transfer of technology for profit as opposed to actually meeting the defense interest of this country, and I most certainly understand the idea that we have to defend ourselves against drugs. But in this instance we have advanced navigational and plotting systems associated with the Blackhawk that I believe may very well fall into the category of transfer of technology which many members of the Committee on National Security on a bipartisan basis oppose.

□ 1315

Now, I believe that we will be taking funds away from Peru and Bolivia. Whether that is true or not, I am not exactly certain because we have not had the hearings on it. Colombia, as

has been well stated, already has a minimum capacity apparently at the present time to deal with the Black Hawk program. Yet, I understand that Colombia is cutting its defense budget.

Now, if we are to form that budget forum, I think that we need to make that part of the dialogue that takes place in the Committee on National Security. Black Hawks are used by our frontline troops. The administration, I understand, is indicating that it will propose super Huey helicopters that are adequate for the drug missions, that can be utilized for night vision, for example, and that the situation now about insurgency requires that we take very, very careful notice of whether or not the military utilizing these helicopters would be people who are actually going to take up the cause against drug trafficking. The corruption factor, aside from those who are heroically trying to pursue it right now within the Colombian military, is a very real question that needs to be answered.

Now, we have already had arguments on this floor or discussion on this floor today about the capabilities of the Black Hawk versus the Huey helicopter, the survivability of the Black Hawks versus the Huey helicopter. That is the proper jurisdiction and purview of the Committee on National Security. I think that we need to take it up in that context.

My understanding is, as well, that the administration is claiming, as has been asserted elsewhere, that we will be taking away from the budget allotted to counternarcotics programs elsewhere in Latin and South America.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that may be the case, or it may not. I am not entirely certain. But I do know this, that in order for us to proceed on these matters, I implore my colleagues, please make these kinds of things a matter of joint jurisdiction with the Committee on National Security which sets the policy here. I think there is a fundamental point not just of procedure in the House, but of acting in the best interests of the security interests of the United States by asking that this be done.

If we are going to simply move to the appropriations committees and have the appropriations committees make these decisions with respect to expenditures, how are we supposed to put together a rational national defense policy in coordination with the international relations aspect that we need to sustain and maintain?

I think, Mr. Speaker, that the distinguished chairman, and I mean that in every sense, that is not a pro forma utilization of the word by me. The distinguished chairman of the Committee on International Relations would agree that those of us who are on the national security side of policy have worked with him in the past and in every instance where he has requested it. He knows that not only myself, but every member of the Committee on Na-

tional Security would be willing to work with him in any instance where the international relations and national security interests of this country are at stake.

On that basis, I would appeal, then, to the chairman of the Committee on International Relations to recognize that our interest is legitimate and that we want to work very closely with him to have a resolution of this matter that would be in the interest of everyone, Colombians and the people of the United States alike.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, it was in October of 1996 that the administration supported the sale of 12 Black Hawks to the Colombian Army. These choppers were delivered, three were destroyed last month in fighting. Nine of the police pilots have had more than 3,000 hours flying helicopters. Eleven Black Hawk maintenance men have been qualified to work on Black Hawks.

So there is an adequate ability to utilize this equipment. And 36 million of the appropriation that was approved last year included maintenance and training for the police. What I am saying is, they are adequately trained. They need this equipment. They need it now. Their police are dying on the battlefield. We are not helping them. What we have given them are used Huey helicopters from the Vietnam era that have now just this week been grounded because of a failure of equipment.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I do not dispute any of that. As I said, I have great respect for the gentleman. However, we battle every day in the Committee on National Security for those millions of dollars. We are not able to maintain our own troops. We are not able to train our own troops. We are not able to equip our own troops. We are not able to maintain quality of life for our own troops.

I am quite willing, in fact I will state that I am prepared today to work with the gentleman to try to accomplish this, but the gentleman is making a case for having joint consideration by the Committee on National Security and the Committee on International Relations so that our own forces can be adequately funded as well.

I thank the gentleman for his kind indulgence.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation to send three Black Hawk utility helicopters to help the Colombian national police win the war on drugs. That is what this is about. Illegal drugs rob Americans of their futures.

Today, approximately 600,000 Americans are heroin users; 1.45 million Americans use cocaine. At least a quarter of the 5- to 7,000 people who try cocaine each year become addicts losing

their careers, their families, and often their lives. Colombian drug traffickers dominate the supply of these illegal drugs. Eighty percent of America's supply of cocaine, and over 6 percent of the heroin seized comes from Colombia.

At a July 1997 hearing in front of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, Subcommittee on National Security, International Affairs, and Criminal Justice, the DEA testified that a drug "flow reduction strategy will be extremely effective in denying transportation options to traffickers and substantially reduce the movement of cocaine in Colombia."

By sending Black Hawks to the Colombian national police for the sole purpose of fighting the illegal drug traffickers and the thousands of guerrillas protecting them, the United States will provide state-of-the-art replacements for the national police's 36 Vietnam era Huey helicopters, four of which have crashed in the last 6 months and, I might add, which now have been grounded by the U.S. Army and the National Guard. Only Black Hawks have the capability to reach the poppy field in the Andes and to sustain ground fire attacks.

I urge support of this legislation. Send Black Hawks to the Colombian national police. Stop the flow of illegal drugs at the source and take a critical step toward ending the illegal drug crisis in America.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HAMILTON), our distinguished democratic leader on the committee.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). The gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HAMILTON) is recognized for 4½ minutes.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the resolution. We all support the work of the Colombian national police. We abhor the violence that has taken over Colombia and threats that these policemen face because of millions of dollars Americans spend on Colombian cocaine.

The chairman is certainly right in wanting to help them, but I do not really think this is the best way to do it. I oppose this resolution for several reasons. I think it is bad policy. As I understand it, the administration is consulting with Members in the hopes of reaching a compromise on this issue of funding for helicopters to the Colombian national police.

They are looking for a compromise because the earmark that designated this money for helicopters came out of accounts that were destined for counternarcotics operations in Peru and Bolivia. The resolution now expresses the sense of Congress that full funding for Bolivia should be provided. If that direction is followed, then what additional countries' counternarcotics programs must be cut?

I do not know if the resolution drafters have considered that issue. They are also looking for a compromise because our people on the ground in Colombia have a lot of questions about whether this is the best way to put the money to use.

The Colombian national police do not have pilots for the Black Hawks and they do not have mechanics for Black Hawks. Yet, getting their people up to speed may take away from the missions they already undertake. We are considering this resolution without asking, I think, a lot of the tough questions about our overall policy toward Colombia and the proper allocation of limited antinarcotics resources.

When this earmark was first discussed, the Chairman and others said that these three Black Hawks would leverage the Colombian Government to match these with three more of their own. What the Colombian Government has shown, after being decertified for the past 4 years, is that they will not commit the Black Hawks we sold them over the past decade to this fight.

So now without examining whether the Colombian national police can put this equipment straight to use, and without a committed partner in the Colombian Government, we are encouraging the President to provide as many helicopters as the Colombian national police need.

I oppose the resolution, but I do not plan to ask for a vote on it. I regret that we are not taking a clear bipartisan step while Colombia is in the midst of such turmoil.

Mr. Speaker, I commend to my colleagues' attention the attached letter that I received yesterday from the State Department regarding House Resolution 398. The letter points out the Administration's concerns with the provision, which I believe was handled in our Committee in a flawed manner. Rather than making a clear bipartisan statement in support of democracy, civilian control of the military and human rights, the Committee hurried through this flawed and partisan resolution. Before we consider it on the Suspension calendar on Monday afternoon, I encourage my colleagues to read the concerns raised by the State Department in this letter.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, DC, March 26, 1998.

Hon. LEE H. HAMILTON,
Committee on International Relations,
House of Representatives.

DEAR MR. HAMILTON: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft House Resolution on provision of UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters to the Colombian National Police. The Administration supports the broad sentiments of the Colombia resolution even as we differ from its prescribed remedy. Our source country strategy is a regional effort. This resolution, focussed only on Colombia, would necessarily draw funds away from our programs in Peru and Bolivia, where we have witnessed dramatic successes in the past two years. Our Peruvian and Bolivian programs have been instrumental in producing a 9.6% drop in regional coca cultivation. Now is not the time to undercut these successful programs.

Colombia is a country besieged by the intertwined threats of illicit narcotics trafficking and the violent insurgency. The Co-

lombia National Police (CNP) and its leadership have done tremendous work, performing with courage and dedication under difficult and dangerous conditions. They deserve both our support and our admiration.

Colombian heroin is a serious threat to our national interests, although the emergence of this threat has not diminished the threat posed by Colombian cocaine. We agree that eradication is the most efficient, but not the only, method for stopping the flow of heroin. Given that opium poppy is grown at high altitudes, improved performance helicopters are necessary to eradicate effectively.

The UH-1H is an older aircraft, but we note that the CNP and the INL Air Division have maintained a high readiness rate at relatively low cost with more than 45 of these helicopters for several years now. The Black Hawk is a high performance helicopter capable of performing well at higher altitudes than the UH-1H, but it is considerably more expensive to procure and maintain and would represent a new and unfamiliar aircraft in the CNP Air Wing. The difficulties of introducing an entirely new aircraft into an existing inventory should not be underestimated. For example, the Colombian Army has had an extremely difficult time integrating the Black Hawks purchased over a year ago into its force structure, and still can not operate them independently.

We believe that a UH-1H upgraded to the SuperHuey configuration can perform quite adequately at higher altitude at far lower cost and disruption to the CNP Air Wing. The State Department has such a refurbishment program underway for 10 UH-1Hs and will continue the program next fiscal year. Contracts were signed with Bell Textron and U.S. Helicopter for the first of these upgrades on March 18.

We believe that the purchase of 3 Black Hawks for the CNP is neither cost effective, nor tactically wise. To contemplate the replacement of the entire CNP UH-1H force with Black Hawks would be financially reckless for both the U.S. as the purchaser and Colombia as the operator. The financial costs of replacing all of the CNP's UH-1Hs (some 35 currently) with Black Hawks and operating them would be prohibitive.

We do not support the purchase of 3 Black Hawks for the CNP and we do not support the wholesale replacement of UH-1Hs with Black Hawks. We believe that the Huey upgrade program which is currently underway is the most cost-effective program for Colombians and the taxpayers of the United States.

As you know, the Administration is currently consulting with interested Members of Congress, including the Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, to determine an alternative approach to fulfilling the interdiction and eradication needs of the CNP. We contracted your staff on March 24 to schedule a meeting for you with Administration officials to discuss this matter, and were told that you would prefer to postpone such a meeting until after your trip to Colombia. We remain available to brief you at your earliest convenience and look forward to providing the Administration's views on Colombia before your Committee next week.

Again, we strongly support the efforts of Colombian National Police and their need for increased helicopter lift capability at higher altitudes. In the last three years, we have dramatically increased counternarcotics funding for Colombia. In FY-95, we provided a total of \$28.85 million, including INL funds, FMF and other assistance. In FY-96, we increased this to \$62.93 million with an increase in Air Wing spending in Colombia and a \$40 million drawdown of defense equipment. In FY-97, the total climbed to more than \$90 million, with dramatic increases in

INL program and Air Wing budgets in Colombia, another drawdown, and the release of up to \$30 million in frozen Foreign Military Financing. This makes Colombia the single largest recipient of U.S. counter-narcotics assistance in the world, a measure of our commitment.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions on this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

BARBARA LARKIN,
Assistant Secretary,
Legislative Affairs.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we have an emergency in Colombia. Good men and women are dying. Our youth are being impacted throughout our country and throughout the entire world because of the major supply of cocaine. Just last week four more of our fellow Americans were taken hostage by the narco-guerrillas who have been openly targeting U.S. civilian military, and even our own DEA personnel.

I remind our colleagues that SOUTHCOM commander U.S. Marine Corps General Wilhelm, just a little over a week ago said this about the events in Colombia: Colombia is very much at risk today.

With regard to the defeat of the Colombian army in the cocaine regions he said, the activities of last week are grim. And on the need for good helicopters in Colombia, General Wilhelm stated, you either get there through the air or in the rivers or you do not get there at all.

Mr. Speaker, we have had hearing after hearing on the Colombian drug policy, including September 1996, when the State Department promised better helicopters for the Colombian National Police Antinarcotics Unit. None, none have yet been delivered and will not for another 4 months. And if they are going to deliver Hueys, we find out that the military has grounded those Hueys.

What this resolution is about is implementing the provisions of last year's fiscal year 1998 foreign operations appropriations bill, a bill that was signed into law by the President last November and has yet to be implemented. The law called for the purchase of three Black Hawk utility helicopters to help fight drugs before these poisons reach our shorelines and destroy our young people.

I might note, in response to the gentleman from Indiana, three Black Hawks have previously been destroyed as they were out there fighting the battle.

□ 1530

The Office of National Drug Control Policy, the ONDCP, on March 10 in a 1998 letter to the Miami Herald on Colombia anti-drug aid, stated, "Source-country strategy to fight narcotics trafficking is the most effective way to stop the flow of drugs."

This resolution supports more such source-nation aid for Colombia that

has been producing 80 percent of the world's cocaine and, most recently, 60 percent of the heroin seized in our Nation. Even the other provision in the same bill to provide Huey upgrades for the police has not been implemented yet, and that contract was signed in March of this year and probably now will not be implemented for a year or more based on the recent grounding of those Hueys.

We are told not one upgrade chopper will even be delivered this fiscal year. The Huey upgrade first promised 18 months ago will not be delivered until a full 2 years later. That is inexcusable when there is a war going on, a war to destroy the drug-producing operations of one of the largest producers in the world.

We need to light a fire under our State Department before we have a full-blown narco-state in Colombia. That is only 3 hours away from Miami, and we are spending more than just the money for three military helicopters. If these inexcusable delays are processed, I, too, have concerns.

This resolution is an effort to send in a strong message to the administration that the Colombian police need good helicopters now and not later. We are looking at a potential narco-state that threatens our own vital interests.

On March 23, the Colombian National Police had to leave four of their officers in a downed Huey. They butchered these four officers. The CNP had Black Hawks that could have lifted that \$1.4 million U.S.-provided Huey helicopter immediately and, more importantly, prevented those four CNP officers from being murdered by the narco-terrorists.

Also, our Black Hawk Huey helicopters have the lift and payload capacity to get enough police, 18, in each unit into the high Andes, where at least four Americans have been taken as hostages. Today, the Colombian police do not have any helicopters that could adequately serve to mount a rescue mission for those American hostages who are being held at some 12,000 feet in altitude.

So let us stop worrying about process and let us get on with helping our fellow Americans and, above all, to help our youth.

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 398.

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, I have jurisdiction over a relatively small but important component of the War on Drugs. The International Narcotics Control account of the Department of State is responsible for counter-narcotics activities in foreign countries, in cooperation with the Drug Enforcement Administration. Most of the funds in this account are intended for eradication of coca and opium crops, primarily in Latin America. Total funding is \$230 million.

One of the important countries in this effort is Bolivia. It has a new government that is committed to eliminating coca and cocaine production in that country in the next five years.

Unfortunately, the State Department decided to reduce United States funding for Bolivia's

counter-narcotics efforts by \$31 million, or by over two-thirds from the projected level of \$45 million. This reduction was taken despite the fact the House Appropriations Committee has more than doubled funding for this account in the past three years.

I strongly support providing adequate air assets for the Colombian National Police. I also strongly support maintaining Bolivia's counter-narcotics program.

I urge the Administration take the necessary steps to address both concerns in the near future. In particular, I urge the Administration to respond to the need to restore funding for Bolivia's counter-narcotics program as soon as possible.

In that regard, at my request the International Relations Committee modified the pending resolution to express support for the restoration of funding for Bolivia's programs, and directing the Administration to act accordingly.

I'd like to thank the Chairman of the International Relations Committee, the gentleman from New York, for his courtesy in agreeing to this modification. I think it makes the resolution stronger, and I urge the House to approve this resolution.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have both procedural and substantive problems with this resolution.

First, this resolution was circulated among committee members only last Wednesday evening. The International Relations Committee held a mark-up less than 24 hours later to consider the bill. The Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere never had a chance to consider the resolution.

Second, committee rules require a week's notice before mark-up legislation. In this instance we got only a few hours notice. Only in unusual circumstances are such procedures allowable under the rules and then only after consultation with the ranking minority member. No such consultation took place.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot understand why we must ram this resolution through the House. It's not as though the helicopters called for by the bill will get there any more quickly. They're not even built yet.

With regard to the resolution itself, Members should be aware that, as the resolution implies, this is not about just 3 Blackhawks. This is about many more. Three is nowhere near enough for the Colombian National Police to have an effective capability. In fact, to be effective, they need more like 12. The 3 Blackhawks in last year's foreign operations bill cost \$36 million. That means that Congress will be on the hook for \$144 million, not \$36 million. And that's without even considering the outyear costs for additional training and maintenance.

Mr. Speaker, the language in last year's foreign operations bill was not considered by the House or Senate before it emerged from conference and it has never been the subject of hearings. Never aired in subcommittee or full committee in either the House or the Senate. I submit that it has skewed the entire anti-narcotics budget for Latin America, causing cuts in funding for both Bolivia and Peru, countries which have been very successful in their anti-narcotics efforts. This congressionally driven mandate has never received any sort of formal assessment to determine whether it meets the most pressing counter-narcotics needs of the Colombian police. We have never asked ourselves whether the CNP has the pilots to fly

these or whether they have the mechanics to maintain them. The answer to both is no. No pilots. No mechanics. No capability.

In fact, both the Colombian Army and Air Force already have Blackhawks, already have the pilots, and already have the mechanics. Yet they seem unwilling to support the counter-narcotics mission of the CNP. As I understand it, the Blackhawks that were sold to Colombia previously were supposed to support that counter-narcotics mission. This lack of support indicates to me that the Colombian Defense Ministry does not believe that the counter-narcotics effort is a matter of national security. I believe it is perfectly reasonable for us to ask for—and get—cooperation between the Colombian military and the CNP.

Mr. Speaker, just a month ago the GAO criticized the administration for not prioritizing the types of equipment that should be provided to Colombia. To my knowledge, no such assessment has been done with regard to Blackhawks. I think we should at least hold ourselves to the standard that we criticize the administration for not meeting.

Let me say finally, that the Colombian National Police, led by General Serrano and the anti-narcotics unit led by Colonel Gallego, have a difficult and dangerous mission. Thousands of their men have given their lives in the fight against narcotics. I believe we should assist Colombia. The question is how best to do that. Last year's bill was not the way to do it and this resolution does not make the situation any better.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the resolution. Thank you.

Mr. MANTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation urging the President to assist the Colombian National Police by providing them with three UH-60L Blackhawk utility helicopters. As an original cosponsor of H. Res. 398, I believe it is important that we provide Colombia with the state-of-the-art equipment they need to fight their war on drugs.

The UH-60L helicopter would be an integral weapon in the war against drugs in Colombia. With its high performance, it is able to withstand the winds associated with the high altitudes of the Andes Mountains, and have the capacity to endure crashes and ground fire better than the outdated UH-1H helicopters. In addition, the UH-60L has the ability to carry sufficient armed anti-drug officers to the areas where they are needed most, in the opium fields high in the Andes mountains.

Colombia is the leading illicit drug producer in the Western Hemisphere, producing 80% of the world's cocaine. In the United States alone, 60% of the heroin seized on our streets originates in Colombia. An immense amount of these drugs arrive in my Congressional District in Queens, New York for distribution around New York City and areas of the eastern United States. It is imperative we win the war on drugs at the source—in the Andes Mountain and other producing areas of Colombia.

In 1996, the government of Colombia was afflicted with major political corruption involving President Ernesto Samper and the Cali drug cartel, leading to the country's decertification as a cooperating nation in the war on drugs by the United States. This year, although it was once again decertified, a national interest waiver allowing for continued economic aid for national security purposes

was set in place for Colombia. It is important the United States recognize that Colombia has made major strides in their fight against drugs thanks in large part to the work of the Colombian National Police.

The elite anti-narcotic unit of the Colombian National Police (CNP) has played a vital role in fighting the war against drugs. The men and women who served in the CNP have risked their lives—losing more than 4,000 officers in combat over the past ten years. The impeccable attention the CNP pays to human rights has been lauded by numerous human rights groups around the world, illustrating their commitment to making their country a better place to live and work without the constant threat of drug-related violence.

While visiting Colombia last year, I saw first hand the workings of the Colombian National Police. Although they have made enormous progress in the fight against illicit drug trade, they need updated equipment to keep up with the forces which they are fighting—guerrillas and the drug cartels.

As a former New York City police officer. I have seen the devastating effects drugs have on our communities. Ignoring the circumstances in Colombia will not make the situation go away. The United States must stand up and actively help those who risk their lives everyday in the war against drugs.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 398. This legislation sends the right message to the Colombian National Police and to the people they protect from the drug-related violence that has plagued their country for far too long. The UH-60L helicopter would bring the CNP one step closer to winning this ongoing war.

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution to urge the President to promptly procure Black Hawk (UH-60) helicopters to assist the Colombian National Police in their fight against the production of heroin.

Last year, this Congress passed the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill with specific direction to the State Department under the International Narcotics Control Program. Within this program, \$50 million was slated for helicopter procurement, including three new Black Hawks and a package of upgrades for Huey (UH-1) aircraft to a Huey II configuration. I'm pleased to say that the Administration has just signed a contract for the delivery of five Huey II's, with the option for five more. Now the Administration must honor the full intent of Congress, and commit to the procurement of three new Black Hawk helicopters.

The upgraded Huey's will meet most of the Colombian National Police's counter drug mission requirements, but a number of high performance Black Hawk helicopters are necessary to reach the poppy fields in the high elevations of the Andes Mountains.

Mr. Speaker, if we are serious about fighting the war on drugs, we must first keep these narcotics from reaching our borders. Our allies in Central and South America are struggling against the international drug cartels—they are out-gunned, out-manned and out-financed. These helicopters are force multipliers, and will go a long way in helping Colombia halt the flow of these drugs to America's children, and I urge the adoption of this resolution.

Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H. Res. 398 and urge the President to expedite the procurement of

three UH-60L Blackhawk utility helicopters and to provide them to the Colombian National Police in support of their efforts against drug producers and traffickers.

Eighty percent of the world's cocaine and more than 60 percent of the heroin seized in the U.S. originates in Colombia. In one recent year, the federal government estimated that there were 141,000 new users of heroin in the U.S. Indeed, the U.S. faces historic levels of heroin use among teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17. This is a significant social, crime, and health issue.

We will not win the war against cocaine and heroin solely by trying to stop these drugs at our borders. We must go to the source. H. Res. 398 urges the President to carry out current law and provide Colombia with three UH-60L Blackhawk helicopters. These aircraft will offer a significant improvement over the National Police's present abilities to eradicate poppy and coca crops in remote areas. In contrast to the much older UH-1H Huey helicopters now in use, Blackhawks have greater range, carry more personnel, and operate more effectively at the high elevations at which opium-producing poppies are grown in the Andes.

The Colombian National Police use helicopters in 90 percent of their counter-drug operations. Over the last six months, at least four crashed or were shot down during such operations. Blackhawk has increased survivability against hostile fire and is more likely to survive crashes. The U.S. benefits directly from the National Police's drug eradication and interdiction efforts. We should ensure that Colombia has the best equipment to wage an effective war on drugs. I urge my colleagues in the House to pass this resolution unanimously.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). The gentleman from American Samoa has 1½ minutes remaining.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 398, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title of the resolution was amended so as to read as follows:

“A resolution urging the President to expeditiously procure and provide three UH-60L Blackhawk utility helicopters to the Colombian National Police solely for the purpose of assisting the Colombian National Police to perform their responsibilities to reduce and eliminate the production of illicit drugs in Colombia and the trafficking of such illicit drugs, including the trafficking of drugs such as heroin and cocaine to the United States, and for other purposes.”

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.